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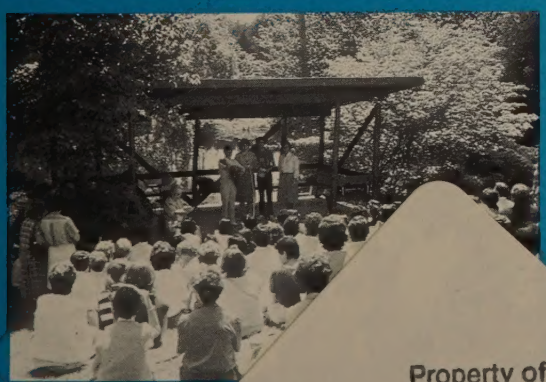

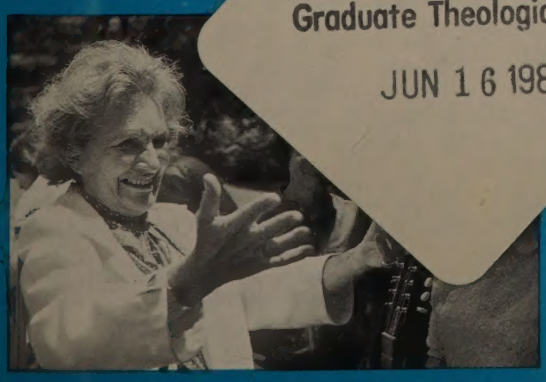

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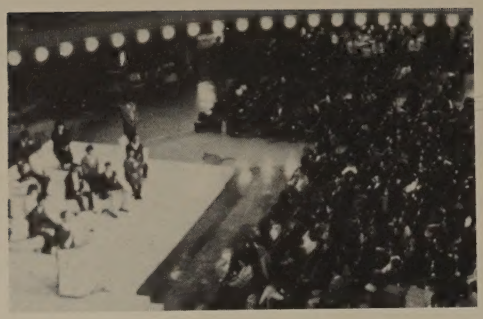

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Buddhist youth want to know

In the March issue of Living City we presented our readers with the news of an important event in the field of dialogue with the faithful of the great religions, namely the trip of Chiara Lubich to Japan and her meetings there with Reverend Nikkyo Niwano, founder of the Rissho Kosei-Kai, and with several of its members and directors.

One of the meetings scheduled for her trip to Japan was an encounter with the youth section of the Rissho Kosei-Kai. These young people had prepared a series of questions for her. We are publishing them here together with the answers as they were printed in the magazine of the gen, the youth of the Focolare.

The gen, also asked Chiara which were her impressions of the trip. She answered with a letter (see page 5) which we thought would also be of interest to our readers.

Question: What is the difference between the Focolare Movement and Christianity as it has existed up to now?

Answer: We cannot speak of a difference between Christianity and the Focolare Movement. The Focolare Movement is Christianity. Perhaps it is Christianity taken seriously, lived in its completeness as others in the Church also do, but it is Christianity.

Furthermore, it is true that the Focolare has its particular characteristics, but it is simply one of the expressions of Christianity today. We are very deeply united with the Catholic Church. Since the Gospel strongly urges us towards the deepest possible unity with the hierarchy of the Church, we have always had this unity, right from the very beginning and throughout our history. The hierarchy, on the other hand, has studied our movement, born within the Church; it recognized it and approved it as authentic Christianity.

Question: What is the Movement's view of the veneration of ancestors?

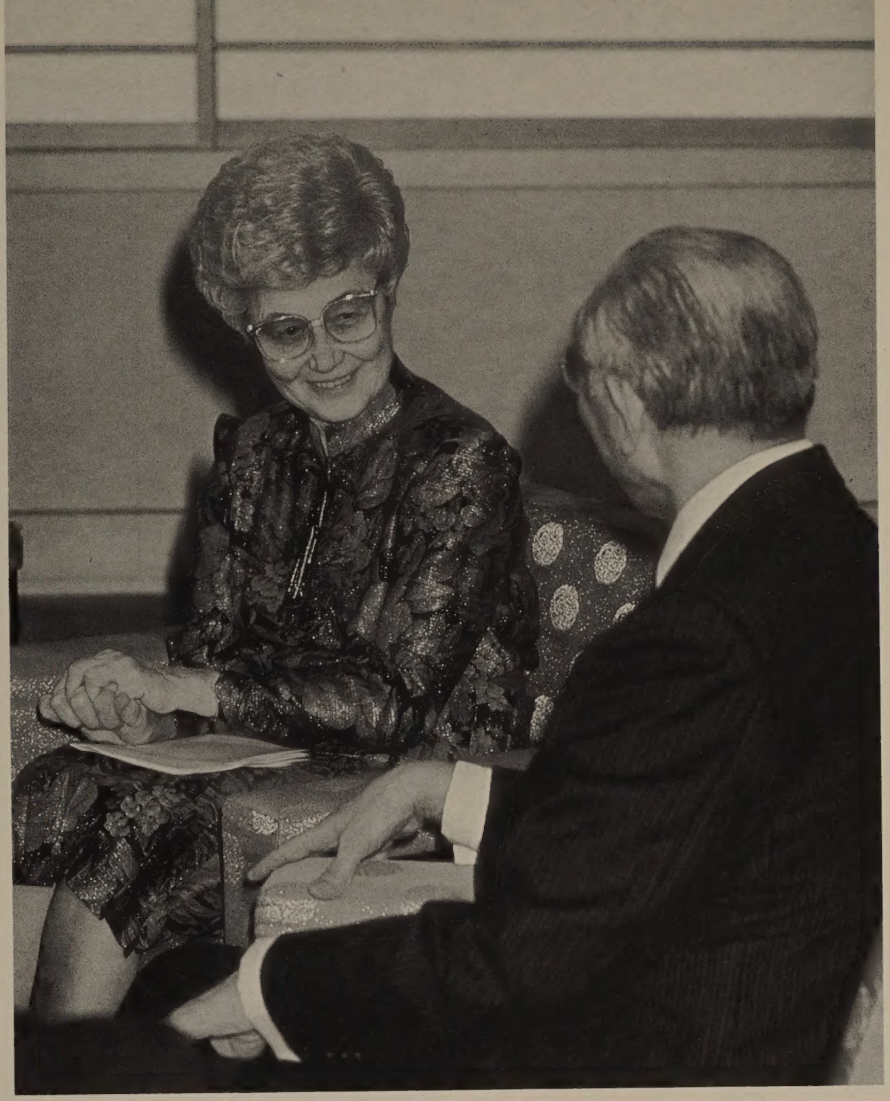
Answer: The Movement holds for those who have passed away, the veneration that all Christians bear in their hearts for their deceased. The rapport with them is very much alive. We know, in fact, that the love that God has poured into our hearts as Christians, does not diminish with death.

For all Christians, then, the saints are their ancestors in the truest sense of the word. They offer the best example of a life of sanctity and together they form what we call the triumphant Church. The greatest saint is Mary, the Mother of Jesus. The saints set such a good example for us; we consider them as our protectors, we remember them following the calendar that marks the date of their death or rather their birth into heaven, we ask them for their intercession. Besides this, we have a feast day in which we remember them and another one in which we remember all those who have passed away.

In the Movement, also, the relationship with those who, after having lived our same Ideal here on earth have passed on to the next life, is one in which our mutual love remains. We pray for one another. We take care of their burial grounds just as other Christians do. We await the moment when we will meet again after the resurrection of the body.

We had a little calendar printed with all the names and dates of their passing to the next life. In this way we can remember particular persons each day.

TOP: Mrs. Yoshie Niwano, wife of Nichiko Niwano, eldest son of Nikkyo Niwano and (above) Mr. Nakayama, director of the youth section of the Rissho Kosei-Kai.



ABOVE: Chiara Lubich and Nikkyo Niwano, President of the Rissho Kosei-Kai, during their meeting on Novemebr 14, 1985.

Question: It is striking to see the wonderful "smile" on the faces of the members of the Movement. What makes you smile in that way?

Answer: The Risen Lord together with his Spirit lives in the soul of the Christian because of the love that God has poured there.

The Spirit of the Risen Lord is the same Spirit who, when present in a soul, pours forth his many gifts, for example, peace, light and joy. The joy of a Christian, therefore and also of the focolarini, is a gift of the Holy Spirit.

Question: The Rissho Kosei-Kai teaches that all persons have the nature of Buddha (that is, the compassionate heart of Buddha, the possibility of becoming Buddha). It is important to develop the nature of Buddha in each person and to learn how to respect it in one another. This attitude is called the way of the Bodhisattva.

In your Movement, instead, you speak of "living the love of God." How do you live this concretely in your everyday life?

Answer: In order to answer this question I would like to say that I see a certain similarity between the compassion and benevolence of the Bodhisattva and the love that we try to live.

Now you are asking me how we live this love of God in our daily life. We try to express our love for God by trying to do his will. But it is particularly his will that we love our neighbor.

We have seen that the best way to do so is to "make ourself one" with our neighbor, with every neighbor. This means to take upon ourselves the sufferings and joys of everyone as if they were our own and act accordingly. The effect of acting this way is that very often we win our neighbor over, they also want to start to loving. Love, then becomes mutual and we put into practice Jesus' new commandment which says, "Love one another ►

as I have loved you." This commandment makes us "one" with one another, thus we work together towards the fulfillment of the Christian ideal: "That all may be one."

Our own experience tells us that love of neighbor and love of God are linked to one another; the growth of one causes the other to grow, like with a plant: the more the root extends down into the earth the more the little plant shoots upwards.

If we love our neighbor all day long, with all our heart, our mind and our strength, when the moment of evening prayer comes, we find that it is easier to recollect ourselves, it is easier to find union with God.

Question: What is the role that young people play in building the future society (immersed as they are in materialism often insensitive to the problems surrounding them) ?

Answer: Today, young people have more qualities and greater opportunities than ever before. They have an almost natural inclination to want to solve today's greatest problem, that is, that of keeping the world alive.

Today, as we know, either we all work together to form a united and peaceful world, or we will all perish together. It's enough to think of the threat of nuclear war. Young people can do a lot in this area. There is something different about them when you consider the past. The mass media enable them now to participate in what is going on all over the world; they enjoy the opportunities created by cultural exchanges and trips to other countries. The end result is that young people of different countries are reaching an always greater likeness in mentality which leads to a similarity in thought, choice, and action. They are drawn closer together in what is good, and sometimes also in what is bad. It is a development that has its negative implications but it also bears within it the possibility of concrete unity. If, therefore, someone with great and valid ideals takes it to heart to direct young people's attention to true values, then surprising effects can be achieved for the good of humanity.

When I spoke to the young people present at the Genfest in Rome I referred to facts which indicate that the longing for unity in the world is one of the signs of our times. It is a particular will of God for humanity today. (One of these signs is the "World Conference of Religions for Peace.")

Young people today, in the way that they live and act, are more prepared, humanly speaking, to work towards this goal. What counts is, as I said before, to motivate them to live for great ideals, to detach

The members of the Youth Movement of the Rissho Kosei-Kai are very active and aim at instilling religious values in young people their age. These Youth, like the Gen of the Focolare Movement, often find that they too must go "against the current" in a predominantly consumeristic Japanese society.

Question: *Could you tell us in a few words your impression of your second trip to the Far East?*

Answer: *When I decided to go to Japan with the idea in mind of visiting the "zone," I was very aware of the fact that the development of the "zone" coincided with the development of the dialogue with the other religions. For this reason I tried,with the focolarini who traveled with me, to focus our attention on the meeting with our Buddhist brothers and sisters.*

After I returned to Rome having experienced the deep spirituality of Reverend Nikkyo Niwano, President of the Rissho Kosei-Kai, having seen the reaction of his whole movement to the message I had prepared and the results of all our meetings there, I realized that God had not only blessed our work but that he had intervened, I would say, with a special grace to consolidate the dialogue between the Focolare and the Rissho Kosei-Kai, between Christianity and Buddhism.

Moreover, it seemed to me that a big step forward in their understanding of Christianity had been taken, just as in the concrete collaboration to bring love into the world, which is the basis of a secure peace. The projects we have undertaken together demonstrate this.

Another noteworthy fact of this second trip was that other Buddhist movements have opened themselves to our movement and to the Catholic Church in general. Among these were: the Shinshuren, the Shinnyo-en and other "new religions," as they are called, in Japan.

Several of their leaders were present when I spoke to the Focolare community on the Word of God and at the end they came, sincerely moved, in order to thank me.

Now let's see where God will lead us. We have the impression he is in a great hurry.

Chiara

themselves, therefore, from everything else in order to take upon themselves the needs of humanity.

Question: According to you, which is the greatest contribution young people can give? What do you think we can do to help them use their creativity and energy, not selfishly but for the good of society and of the family?

Answer: Young people have always possessed such great spiritual values as generosity, as dissatisfaction with a mediocre life, as the ability to give themselves for great ideals, as detachment from many things which older people are perhaps attached to.

I think that what should be taken into particular consideration is their capacity to embrace great ideals.

In my experience with young people I have seen how they can give themselves with enthusiasm to a great ideal which is authentic and convincing and which offers them the means of bringing it about. We have seen, for example, how fervently they accept God as their Ideal, especially after experiencing the failure of other ideals. I have seen how they embrace this ideal because of the concrete consequences it has on people's lives. I am convinced that in order to build a new world, a world at peace, we must rely on our young people and their aptitude and willingness to accept the faith without giving too much weight to what it might cost them.

Question: What does the word "peace" mean to you?

Answer: "Peace" is result of unity. When there is unity in our relationship with others and with God, then we experience inner peace. When there is unity among people then there is peace among people. When there is unity among nations then there is peace in the world.

Question: We would like to seek ways of collaboration and unity between Buddhism and Christianity, in particular between the Rissho Kosei-Kai and the Focolare. How can we bring this dialogue forward ahead in a concrete way?

Answer: I would say that there are different ways to bring forward the unity among persons of different religions. For example, to pray for one another; to emphasize all that unites us and to try to live it together (for example, we all desire to do the will of God, to deny ourselves, to love our neighbor or have compassion, and so on); to try to get to know one another (for this it is very useful to have schools that increase our knowledge of other religions); to work together for the good of humanity (for Third World Nations; to relieve hunger in the world; for peace and so on); to place ourselves in God's hands and allow him to lead us forward.

Chiara Lubich

The Los Chircales Project

By MARIELE QUARTANA

On the outskirts of Bogota the capital of Columbia there is a large district of about 100,000 inhabitants. Los Chircales, its name, is located at the border of the southern zone, an infamous area off-limits to the young people of the northern part of the city because of its poverty, vice and danger. A line of demarcation cuts the city in two. Just behind the last of the lodgings lie the highlands.

It's a striking backdrop: arid cliffs, angular rocks, and russet- colored earth. Here and there in natural craters and shell-shaped excavations the abundant rain-water collects. "This is a safe road we're on, even the busses take this route," Carlos Casabeltrami tells me, a focolarino who has been here for a long time. "But just a little further ahead lies a totally different world," he added. "Los Chircales" means "the ovens for bricks" and it is well-named. Among the cracks in the earth are wide deep wells and small and squat guard towers. Blue smoke rising from the earth tell us the wood-burning ovens are in operation. If we climb up into the valley amid rocks, low grass and shrub we come across the living quarters of the people, bare huts, and tiers of rough-hewn bricks, the same brown color as the earth.

There are about 700 families up there living along the ravines where for generations an arduous and meager lifestyle has been passed on. Everyone's job even the children's—consists in amassing the earth, softening it in the water of big tubs and making a paste out of it. Some are helped by mules.

This clay is then pressed by hand into the shape of wood and left to dry until the bricks can be extracted and placed in the ovens to bake.

"You should see the 5 and 6 year olds," Carlos tells me, "with as many bricks on their backs as they can possibly hold. They collect the bricks in sacks and climb the steep slopes carrying them to their father or older brothers who will place them in the oven. The children continue this the year round, even when its cold and the temperature falls below freezing. Their hands are mutilated from handling the clay and their faces already look old and worn-out.

"Speculators bought this southern zone of the city a long time ago for almost nothing. When these simple folk came from the countryside they put up shacks and settled here leasing the land from the owners in order to set up this rudimentary industry. They are a basically hardworking people who still have a healthy sense of the family.

"Although we find the child labor difficult to accept, their point of view is that even the children must share in their hard life as if it were the inevitable fate of them all."

Marita', a focolarina who has lived in the Andes Mountain region of South America for many years relates, "There is a

A project of the New Humanity Movement has united both rich and poor of Bogota in working together to improve the quality of life of a disadvantaged population.

particular widespread phenomenon in Bogota that you won't find here in Los Chircales. In Bogota there are the so-called "gamines," abandoned children who grow up and live in the streets. Stealing and crime are their way of life. Instead the people of Los Chircales are poor but there is a degree of solidarity among them. They help each other. To give you an example, several youngsters left orphan were taken in by other families.

"The fact that these people are isolated even though they live so close to the part of the city with the high crime rate has helped preserve them," Carlos adds.

"At most they'll drink a little too much beer and do some small-time gambling."

It has been here among the people of Los Chircales, that a project of the New Humanity Movement has been undertaken. It began some time ago but it has met with so many difficulties and blind alleys that it is only now that the first tangible results can be seen.

In 1978 there was a slogan in the Focolare Movement throughout the world:"To give our lives for our people" which set off a chain reaction of authentic efforts of solidarity toward those in need. At that time, the pastor of the region of which Los Chircales is a part and who knows the Focolare, first told us about the plight of these people. We began to go there in two, in three, in four. First young people, then the adults. Always in larger numbers.

Now there is a group which goes there regularly. They climb up there to make themselves a part of the lives of the people and lend a hand where it is needed. The people count on their help and they come from the most distant and isolated slopes to seek it.

Urgent and pressing needs were immediately observed. The ever-present companions of poverty were manifest: malnutrition, problems due to lack of hygiene, inadequate housing, all kinds of sickness, illiteracy and lack of proper clothing.

There is one person who lives there called Tiberius. His children are still small but he looks like an old man because of the strenuous life he has led. Although he is as poor as the others he wanted to make a hut available to others. It was about 15 square feet in size. He prepared it with care and a lot of good will and it became a clothing shop and a medical and dentistry clinic of sorts. Shelves were put up on the walls and an examination cot was placed in a corner. Then clothing began to arrive from the city. Ever since this little thrift shop was opened the flow of clothing has never stopped arriving. At prices that are little more than symbolic the people can buy what they need.

A doctor and dentist are now regularly available at the clinic. The dentist takes care of the simpler dental problems up there but he sees in his office in the city all those who need the kind of treatment that can only ►

Previous page: The children of Los Chircales are preparing to carry the dried clay bricks to the oven.

Above right: A group of children study at their improvised school desks made of rock. Below right: An inside view of one of the huge ovens where the bricks are baked.

be provided there. Dental and medical care must be paid for, too, but instead of 1000 pesos they will be asked in the neighborhood of 50 pesos.

It always amazes me how, deep down, the human person has a need to go beyond the narrow confines of selfishness and breath the air of solidarity and altruism. It is there that our humanity matures and we are able to taste what happiness is. Recently the orthodontist confided: "I was often sad and depressed because of my problems. To go to Los Chircales gives meaning to my life."

It's contagious. A medical student found at Los Chircales a way to put into practice her religious convictions. She soon realized how difficult it was to offer continuity of care to these people who had such great needs. Gradually an approach was found. A whole group of medical students like herself joined her and were able to provide a more preventive kind of medicine. They visit all the babies of the zone, keep updated medical records on them, evaluate nutritional needs, and teach the families to eat more adequate diets. By visiting, they have first-hand knowledge of each family's health needs.

Teachers alternate giving courses to children and adults on how to read and write. There are no schools at Los Chircales. Very few children go down to the city schools. All the others spend their time working and going back and forth from the slopes. Now with paper and pencil in hand they come to classes held outdoors. Serious and proud in their improvised classroom among the rocks, they are emerging from a long tradition of illiteracy. Timidly but curiously they are receiving their first catechism lessons. They have a natural sensitivity which makes them eager to learn. Little by little, almost spontaneously, they are living what they are learning. "It is really striking to see how religious education educates the whole person," notes Marita'. "The gospel message reaches the heart of these 'little men and women.' You can see the progress even by how they come: washed and clean, more orderly, more serene, less aggresive and brusk in their behavior."

"What is the situation at Los Chircales at present? What are the plans,"? I asked.

Marita' and Carlos tell me that the situation had reached low ebb. The fact of the matter is that this southern zone is entirely in the hands of a politically oriented association of landowners who are the middle men in the sale of the bricks made here. This brick making process is becoming less and less in demand. The bricks are used mostly for foundations right now or once in a while architects use them to build, for example, fashionable rustic walls in expensive villas. As a result the price of bricks has been falling continually. This

(Continued on page 25)

FAMILY LIFE

Weakened family life is one of the greatest social ills of our time.
The "New Family" Movement has as its aim to bring the Focolare spirit of unity into family life, so that each family will be deeply united within itself and with other families.

THE CHALLENGE OF A SPECIAL MOMENT

PART III

We continue our series of articles on a particular phase of family life, that is, dealing with young adults at the time when they are exerting their independence in the struggle to find themselves and their place in the world. They sort out and test the values passed on to them and it is not unusual for them to find it difficult to communicate across the abyss of an entire generation. In this issue a couple of the New Family Movement shares how the arrival of a new baby affected their family, and in particular, their teenage son.

Marlies: "We have five children and are expecting our sixth, which is due in two months. Here in Holland families usually have one or, at the most, two children. We are evidently going against the general trend.

The one fundamental thing for us who believe in God is that is that we know we are not alone. There is a Father who thinks of us, who is Father to all our children too, and he knows what our needs are. Generally people are afraid to have children because their criterion is economic security and the conviction that you have to give your children everything that consumerism offers. If this were the case, if one should build only on human security, then our life would be absurd. We were very fond of children but we didn't make a precise plan. Certainly this sixth baby wasn't planned. I have had to brace myself to accept it and to be happy about it, because it seemed as though everything was getting on top of us...."

Ernst: "It was a big step for me too, but even more difficult was how to tell Jesse our eldest child who is sixteen. His friends at school are older than himself and it was obvious that he would be influenced by their way of thinking, which challenges our way of life. Marlies wanted me to tell him rather than her, and it was better that way. Man to man we felt free to say what we thought. He brought up the point about the house being small, about too many jobs that he was already having to do, the excessive number of children which would make us look even more ridiculous in other people's eyes. He even mentioned the trousers that he wouldn't be able to buy himself.... I let him vent his feelings, then together we looked at all the arguments. He began to think rationally and his fears subsided...."

Marlies: "I joined in the discussion too since I had heard something of what was going on in the next room. 'Look,' I said to Jesse, 'even if we were very rich and could buy you

"We have five children and are expecting our sixth. Here families usually have one or two children so we are evidently going against the general trend."

whatever you wanted, we wouldn't do it because we should be happy with what we have.... For example, we wouldn't buy you new trousers anyhow because you have enough. Dad has a good car because he travels a lot. If he didn't travel then he would have a cheap one. The Queen has a golden carriage because she is the Queen; I can't imagine myself in a golden carriage. As you know, we always think first of the children and then we think about ourselves. For example, my bicycle has been broken for three months and I go shopping on foot; but you have a new bike. Then he interrupted me. 'Mom, I'll take care of your bike.' With the help of his friends he dismantled it secretly; he didn't want me to see what he was doing. Then one day he called me. I opened the door: there was the bike completely restored and painted in gold. 'Now,' he said, 'you will be a little bit like the Queen!'"

Ernst: "I am an architect. I have a studio with an engineering partner. Certainly, if I didn't have such a large family and all my time and energies were applied to my work, we would not have so many financial problems. But because my career is not my first priority and because I don't want to become a slave to my profession, my earnings haven't increased. My partner, on the other hand, works very hard. Each of us looks after his own clients so that the earnings are not divided in two. He has two children. He can't understand our choice at all. Neither, however, can he understand the problems and difficulties which he has at home in spite of being very well off. The thing is that we are part of a community where everyone lends a hand. By now we know that when the financial situation gets difficult help always arrives. This faith keeps us in humility and truth. We try to do everything by ourselves as far as possible but when we can't manage we honestly let other people know our needs. And that is not the normal thing to do in this country where everyone wants to appear rich and more self sufficient than they really are."

Marlies: "Near us there is a married couple who have chosen not to have children because they say they don't see a future for this world. They both work and live to go on vacation and have whatever they want. They often ask us where we get the courage to have so many children. It is impossible for us to explain without eventually speaking about Love which becomes Providence. They say this is absurd but at the same time they see our life; what we need comes even in the most unimaginable ways. At times you would think Providence was having a laugh. For example, our children are born at home, not in hospitals. This

means that we have to have an obstetrician or a nurse there, which is quite costly. When I had our third child, the nurse who came charged me a reduced rate because one of my sisters came to help her. Such a sincere relationship grew up between us that at the next birth she offered her services for half the previous amount. Our relationship grew. She came to visit me and at the same time helped me with the children or did the washing or ironing as if she were part of the household. When the fifth child arrived we were like sisters; by then it was absurd to talk about money.

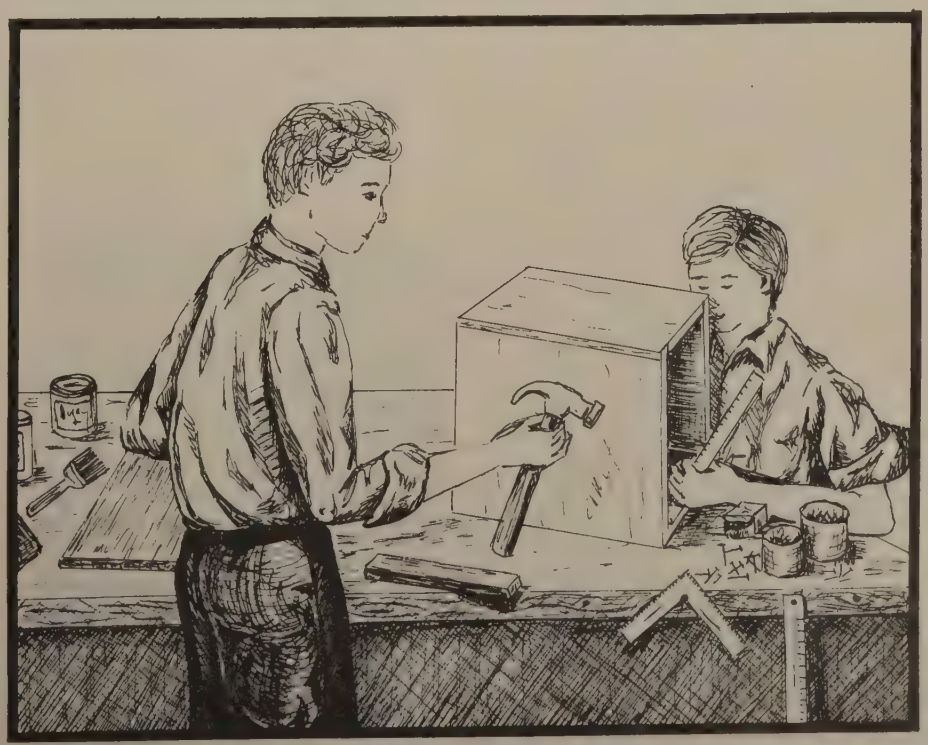
Now, before I realized that I was pregnant again I had already given away the stroller and all the baby clothes I had had. The nurse on the other hand, whose only child was then sixteen, had kept all his baby things with the intention of giving them to him for his children when he got married. A few days ago she gave them to me so that the new baby would have her little gift.

Our family doesn't consist of just a father, mother and five children, it is much bigger: our house is always open, always full of people ready to help. Even Jesse's friends who have more than they could want and don't have to lift a finger at home, are always in our house, at times washing dishes and cleaning floors. What do they find? I don't know ... perhaps the truth about life."

Ernst: "Our house is very small; compared with others it seems like a doll's house. It is made for a family with two children. Every time a new baby arrives we have to change everything around because every inch is already in use. It's good exercise in inventiveness for an architect like me. I work everything out myself because there is no ready-made furniture which would fit in our house; we would have to move out ourselves. So on the weekends Jesse and his friends get up early to help me make the new furniture. It's a marvellous game and each time space is made for the new arrival."

Marlies: "Yes, it's like this in one's heart and in life. There is no insurmountable difficulty for whoever welcomes a baby. Notwithstanding human plans and projects, with the birth of a new child, a new plan of God is born, which gradually makes its own way." □

"... even more difficult was the problem of how to tell Jesse our eldest child who is 16."



"Nothing is ever commonplace"

The story of Elizabeth of the Trinity

"God dwells within us, so we need not go searching for him in the distance." A Carmelite nun from Dijon has left this message for the men and women of today. After only six years she reached the exalted heights of contemplation and sanctity, and was recently beatified.

By CLAUDIO CASOLI

Guns, horses and soldiers: these were the first things that Elizabeth Catez was aware of around her. She was born in 1880 on a French military base, where her father served in the rank of captain. France had been defeated ten years earlier at Sedan by Bismarck's Prussia, and was already dreaming of the retribution eventually achieved in the 1914-18 war.

Elizabeth was orphaned by the death of her father when she was seven, but she had already inherited his unruly, willful and fiery personality. She confessed years later. "I thank God for giving me a mother who was both gentle and strict and knew how to tame my stormy character."

When she was eleven years old she made her first communion which was an extraordinary experience. She felt herself distanced from all that surrounded her, as if her being were absorbed into the mysterious absolute that emanates from the eucharist. Her mother introduced her into bourgeois society where she was admired: she was also musically inclined and won a first prize for playing the piano. But at fifteen she confided to her mother: "Nothing interests me any more: only Jesus attracts me."

Her secret dream was to become a Carmelite, but her mother refused consent until she was nineteen. On the feast of the Immaculate Conception in 1901, she was clothed with the habit and took the name of Sister Marie Elizabeth of the Trinity. She wrote: "I have found my heaven on earth because heaven is God and God is in my soul." In her short life in the cloister, which lasted only six years, Elizabeth focused her attention on the presence of God in her soul, and was so dazzled that she wrote to a priest from the cell where she was confined by illness: "I cannot go into church and I cannot receive communion (at that time there were restrictions), but you see, the good God does not need the sacrament in order to come to me. I seem to have him in all his fullness just the same. This presence of God is so beautiful because he is in the depths of my being. There in the heaven of my soul I love finding him, because he never leaves me. God is in me and I am in him!"

Contemplation

She dwelt on the words of St. Paul: "You must know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is within—the Spirit you have received from God."[1] Already during the first days of her life in the cloister, Elizabeth had lost herself in the contemplation of God, one and three, who is present in everything and at every moment.

She wrote to her mother: "God is Spirit and it is through faith that we draw near to him. Remember that your soul is the temple of God—as St. Paul is

always saying—and at every moment of the day and night, the three divine persons live within you.... We need to be conscious of the fact that God can be found in the innermost depths of our being, and so we can face everything together with him. Then nothing is ever commonplace, not even when we are doing the most ordinary actions, because we are not living in these things but are going beyond them."

The discovery of this intimacy which God maintained with her, induced her to offer her life and sufferings for the Church (to which she felt wholly committed) on the journey towards redemption, full of hope and desire. "It seems to me that the souls on earth and the glorified who are in the light of the vision, are very close to one another, because all are in communion with the same God. The Father, who gives himself to those who are united in faith, and satiates everyone with his divine splendor, is nevertheless the same God that dwells within us."

Faith, in the theological and not the emotional sense, was the light in which Elizabeth engulfed herself since God had endowed her with the gift of infused contemplation. Her teacher was always St. Paul: "Faith is confident assurance concerning what we hope for, and conviction about things we do not see.[2] But Elizabeth was certain that through faith she could see even those things that are invisible. "All is delightful at Carmel: the good God is to be found in the laundry room as well as at prayer. Everywhere only he is present. One lives him, one breathes him.... My horizons widen more and more each day. I feel him present to such a degree that it seems it must be only a veil that separates us and that he is just about to appear to me."

Her sister imagined her alone in a little cell, so Elizabeth replied showing her that in faith, distances no longer exist. "You think of me in my little cell? I'll make an appointment with you here every night at eight o'clock."

She felt that the Church is the guarantee of redemption for everyone. She prayed confident of having power over the heart of Christ and of speaking in his name, and promised prayers and graces. "I feel that all the treasures that are in the soul of Christ are mine and I feel so rich."

Silence

Such a perfect union with Christ was then followed by an invitation from him to climb onto the same cross and "to fill up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ for the sake of his body the Church,"[3] in the words of St. Paul. Then came a period of dark solitude, silence on God's part and a feeling of being completely abandoned."

In the beginning Elizabeth experienced stupefaction and bitterness which an obscure light seemed to invade and freeze her soul. She wrote, "The psalmist sings that he 'make darkness the cloak about him: dark, misty rain-clouds his wrap.'[4] Then he seems to contradict himself saying, 'You are ... robed in light as with a cloak.'[5] What I understand from this apparent contradiction, is that I must immerse myself in the sacred darkness that creates the night, which is an empty void.... It is no longer a mere veil that hides him from me, but a thick high wall. It is hard to bear, having felt him so close! But I am ready to remain in this state for all the time that it pleases God to leave me here, for my faith tells me that he is always still near me."

OPPOSITE PAGE: Elizabeth at 21 months and (above) at 18 years. "Unruly, willful and fiery," was her mother's description of Elizabeth's personality.

To someone anxious for proof of faith she wrote: "In the hours ... in which you feel frightful emptiness, keep in mind that it is then that he is excavating in your soul the capacities to receive him.... Do not give too much importance to the fact of being set on fire or of being discouraged. To pass from the one state to the other is the law of exile."

Two abysses existed within her: on the one side was God wrapped in darkness, and on

(Continued on page 24)

At one time or another we have all wished we could stop time. Speaking to a group of children years ago Chiara Lubich shared with them her own desire to do so and the solution she found for her life. "Today" is a new column where we will share experiences reflecting the efforts of people to live this experience of making the most of the moments which fill the day. They just might help us all to live days that will remain forever.

HOW TO STOP TIME

Today was a Saturday morning and I was at my job in a hospital chemistry lab. My colleagues and I need to process most of the blood specimens before we can perform the test for each specimen. However, nearly one third of the specimens we expected were brought into our lab by the phlobotomists half an hour late. This automatically delayed our schedule. We tried to be patient and we got all the instruments ready. Later we found out that one of the phlobotomists, Peter, did not show up that day and did not call. My two partners started to grumble about him. They talked about how he hadn't done his job properly other times, as well. By 11:00 a.m. they were still on Peter's case. I was tempted to join in. I had to start my work half an hour later than usual and it would mean that I would leave work late. But I remembered a sentence I had heard during the Mariapolis last year, "To love means to love everyone all the time." I decided not to join the complaints. Instead I said something like,"He seems to have a lot on his mind lately." Just that was enough to calm the situation and improve the atmosphere in the lab. It costs so little sometimes to keep unity.

H.L.

"At one point a problem came to my mind but since I know that Jesus solves all my problems, I took a chance and asked him the impossible.

I remembered a meditation: "Time is fast escaping me," and I thought, "That's true! How quickly the days pass!" I asked, "In that case, Jesus help me stop time."

And he helped me understand how. I should live the present moment well, with all my heart, with all my soul and strength, letting go of everything, everything, everything that should go. Nothing else should exist for me except to do the Will of God. What I have to do I should do well as if it were a beautifully wrapped package to present to the angels and to God.

So now before each action I say, "For you, Jesus." Then I try to do as perfectly as possible what I must do and when I finish and before I start something else, I send my gift off to heaven. This way the past remains and time doesn't pass by but stops up there."

Chiara Lubich

Today the telephone rang and since I was urgently awaiting a phone call I thought it might be for me. But no, it wasn't, my son said. Immediately it came to my mind that I could use my daughter's telephone and as if she read my thoughts she said to me "Don't use mine." I realized I was getting

Since last spring I have felt that God has been asking me to let go of everything and I have been saying, yes, yes, yes. First my daughter's terrible illness and hospitalization; later the same for her husband; then my husband's three hospitalizations; loss of my job when the division and subsidiaries of my firm were sold to a huge industry from the south; a car accident; my health since I have had an inner ear disturbance and more.

However, an experience I heard recently of trying to love 100 percent with all one's heart even in sickness made me realize immediately what I had to do. I knew I could not waste any more time. I had to love Jesus Forsaken[1] totally: 100 percent. I had to really give all these sufferings and my weariness to him, replace fear with my total love and and continue on the Holy Journey,[2] offering everything, everything, for this work of God which is the Work of Mary,[3] as if it were the last year of my life.

I immediately put all the terrible worries that were frightening me, out of my mind. I then made my plans: I did all my chores of the day with more concern and attention for brotherly love; started with plans for the Living City subscription campaign, and for Mariapolis Luminosa next September; got in touch with the people entrusted to me and made plans to attend the Volunteer's[4] Convention which up to now seemed so impossible.

My goal? To not be concerned about all the things that were placed in such a safe place as God's hands, including my health, but to be completely healthy spiritually by embracing Jesus Forsaken with my whole heart and my will when he visits me. And, in every moment of my difficult days yesterday and the day before, with everything I did I said, "for you."

The results? On both these evenings when I made an examination of conscience I was able to answer yes to the questions, yes, one hundred percent and not the usual hedging of "I tried" or "I want to."

H.H.

1) Refers to the moment of Jesus on the cross when he cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" 2) Refers to the Holy Journey of life, the pilgrimage of the people of God as they continually strive toward God. 3) The official name of the Focolare Movement. 4) See inside back cover.

Today my co-worker was away on holiday and I was alone. My employer who initially had come to assist me began instead to reprimand me. She did so in front of the children. As a result of this interruption and and the unpleasant interchange I could see that the class was getting out of control and harmony was gone. I told her that we could take this up later because I had to take care of the class. I was rather curt when I said this. Then I looked at her face and I recognized what I was doing wrong! So many of the staff treat her abruptly, at times very rudely. It came to my mind that I was more interested in doing a good job with the class than loving this neighbor in front of me. I apologized immediately for my manner of speaking and I explained to her with as much love as I could that I had to keep my attention on the children and promised to talk to her later about this. All day I looked for opportunities to be love for my employer. I did not go home after work but stayed to clean and tidy the surroundings as perfectly as I could because I knew it would be love for my boss to have her school appear as well as possible for the very important guest who was coming, the granddaughter of the foundress of this method of teaching. I was very happy and not even tired. While I was cutting cakes for the refreshment, I had the hundredfold. As I was putting the finishing touches to my class our guest came in and I was able to talk to her and welcome her to our school. My employer and I had such a beautiful rapport that I know it was the fruit of my love for Jesus that had mended the gap.

E.A.

et and we were at a crisis
t but, "No" I said to
elf, "there is another way
eal with this."I tried to
gnize Jesus Forsaken in my
ghter's reaction and kept
ng her. Overcoming my feel-
I asked her if I could use
phone for three minutes
I asked with love. Her answer was a beautiful smile, a smile I hadn't seen for a long, long time. I thanked her. The rapport between my daughter and I hasn't been too easy with our very different characters but I can see that little by little love, real love, conquers everything.

M.G.

WORK IN THE SOCIAL THOUGHT OF THE CHURCH PART V

WORK AND THE MERCHANT

By ANTONIO MARIA BAGGIO

The middle ages: between the cracks of an expanding society where occupations and wealth were multiplied, people faced new forms of poverty.

"And I used to work with my hands"—Francis of Assisi explains in his testament—"and I still desire to work; and I firmly wish that all my brothers give themselves to honest work. Let those who do not know how to work learn, not out of the desire for receiving wages for their work but as an example and in order to avoid idleness. And when we are not paid for our work, let us have recourse to the table of the Lord, seeking alms from door to door."

The companions of Francis made this voluntary choice of poverty as did other movements of gospel inspiration like the Humiliati, a lay association which devoted itself to works of charity and penance, or the Waldensians. The poverty embraced by these groups was in striking contrast to the social background the individual members often came from. Peter Waldo was for example, a wealthy merchant (like Francis' father). Their own education and background was based on an aristocratic model, available in those times to the wealthy middle class.

The people of this new middle class sought titles of nobility for their children which by birthright they themselves had been denied. With this in mind their sons became cavaliers, and they invested capital in the acquisition of lands that certain feudal lords were forced to sell because of debts. At this point economic power changed hands. The city was no longer only a center for commodities and trade, it became the center of production. By this time the cities were enjoying a certain autonomy in relation to the new political structures that were developing and pretty much dictated policy to the countryside by virtue of their economic power.

Peter di Bernadone must have had few satisfactions in life granted him by his half-crazy son, Francis. The extravagance of Francis, the young aristocrat, clashed with his business-minded father as much as would his evangelical generosity.

Lordly extravagance, the shrewd business sense of the middle class, Christian poverty: these three contrasting attitudes lived alongside one another in the complex society emerging from the year 1000.

The Practicing ...

The newly developed professions had need of the Church. Many of the new occupations were despised and looked down upon if not condemned and, for a merchant, moral credibility was as important as financial credit. But even the professionals or professional categories well on their way to becoming established and therefore without need of ecclesiastical approval nevertheless sought the Church's acceptance and legitimization because the mentality of the times was pervasively Christian.

The identity of the individual was developed by belonging to a professional category which was encouraged by the gregarious nature of the autonomous city-states at that time rich in religious elements. This identity acquired solidity as the people came to understand their profession or trade as a vocation.

In the centuries following the year 1000 A.D. the whole of Europe became one market. The Church, for its part, recognized commerce as an acceptible and lawful employment, or better, the conviction matured that every occupation is lawful if it has a beneficial function.

The Council of 1215 made the annual confession of sins obligatory. As a result, the problems of conscience of those who carried on occupations which had been blacklisted up to this time, increased. These problems were dealt with in manuals for confessors. Among the authors of these manuals we find members of the mendicant orders. These mendicant friars had no property rights and worked or begged for their support. They were freer then the monks to do works of active ministry and were familiar with these problems. Dominicans and Franciscans, the original mendicants, had, in fact, built their monasteries outside the city limits beside the immigrants who in the 1200's swelled the cities and settled on the far side of the walls erected in the preceding century which now enclosed only residential quarters. It was no longer sins that were classified but rather the sinners, meaning the effort was made to understand the difficulties born by a particular social category, which sins were more easily incurred by Christians who practiced a particular trade.... Gradually it was recognized that no activity in itself (except those clearly immoral) prevented a person's salvation.

In forming this opinion the realization took shape that the intention of the person performing that occupation had to be taken into consideration.

It was in this way that theology opened itself to the needs of the new professions. How could it have been otherwise since the universities where theologians taught had become guilds of students and teachers? The intellectual, as we would understand the term, emerged at the time of the independent city-states. The intellectual, too, was a craftsman who practiced the art of writing and teaching.

...And the Indifferent

We shouldn't think however that only an industrious and pious lay citizenry existed. With the economic and institutional autonomy from the Church also grew a noteworthy indifference to religious values. Before these values were "handed down from above," as the feudal mentality of the times present also in the Church would have it. But now they reminded many of the past status of servitude. If we read the discourses—still in existence—that the friar preachers delivered to their fellow citizens, we discover that their principal enemy was money, one of the pillars of the new world of production.

For those experiencing religious indifference the element of wonder was the first element of faith to undergo crisis. The merchant learned in his travels the world over to recognize certain laws of nature and utilize them to the profit of his commerce. He believed in what is logical and became more apt to accept a natural rather than supernatural explanation of things. Rational objections in regard to faith grew. A mentality developed which held that this life was enough, it wasn't necessary to strain oneself in preparation for the next.

The work of one's hands

It's not only our hands which work but the entire person, Thomas Aquinas would make the point. The whole person is expressed in work activity and the obligation to work, established by St. Paul, is a precept of the natural law.

The common good must be the guideline for the organization of society. During the 13th century, the century of Thomas Aquinas, the conviction matured that every occupation is lawful if it has a beneficial function. Work itself, then, became the point of reference: commerce, too, is permissible, the friars maintain, if we consider earnings as a compensation for the merchant's work. It was a conceptualization which was open to the demands of the new world of the middle class. By the same logic even industrial profit could be considered compensation for the manager.

Aquinas certainly had no intention of defending the expansionism the middle class was forcing on the cities with no regard for the workers and their families. Rather, he remained faithful to a medieval concept of property that he would have liked to have seen ►

remain small yet widespread, able to furnish each person with the necessities without creating inordinate worries which would distract the individual from his religious obligations. Property is fully justified only in function of the common good; its task is to place at the disposal of work all the necessary means so that the common good can be achieved. Also work for Aquinas was primarily a permanent function, a duty to fulfill for all one's life, in a society which did not expand.

This "medieval" concept of Aquinas—which in many respects was late if we consider that this was an epoch running forward at breakneck speed—was accepted by the Church. Also Aquinas tolerated the condition of servitude as a beneficial, reality which allowed some to engage in more elevated activities because others took care of their material necessities. Work, in fact, was obligatory, but if a person had other means of support, Aquinas specified, he was not compelled to work.

Unjust Servitude

Naturally he was aware that those were not the best of social conditions. If it weren't for original sin there would be no servitude and the servant relationship for Aquinas reguarded only the performance of specific tasks the servant was obliged to do and in no way involved the person beyond that. Basically, he accepted the social structures of his time, however, he envisioned almsgiving as a strong corrective measure.

We should keep in mind, that almsgiving is something vaster than what we understand by the term today. It does not mean giving a small donation to the poor every now and then but rather giving a substantial and important transfer of one's own income, of one's own property, sufficient to enable the poor person to live without suffering want or degradation. It is a revolutionary phenomenon that takes place peacefully in a thousand little hidden ways, and the word compassion originally meant the feeling from which it sprang; for Christian compassion is what inspires this communion of goods, the ordinary expression of which is almsgiving.[1] Aquinas thought that through almsgiving we would arrive at the equal distribution of goods that private ownership of property does not bring about. Almsgiving therefore coincides with all that is not necessary and therefore should be given to others.

Aquinas's presupposition seems to have been based on the conviction that the amount of goods available are enough to cover the needs of everyone, so that a perfect distribution of goods would resolve every problem. He maintained the point, though, that what is necessary to each person depends on his or her state in life and therefore a noble could consider necessary the trappings customary to his rank.

The rights of the poor had no juridical force and not even the writings of the Fathers of the Church claimed more. Only Cardinal Cajetan, Aquinas's commentator, pushed further. As did other jurists of his time, Aquinas stated that stealing in cases of necessity is not sinful. Necessity made the one who stole, owner of what he took. With this in mind, then, Cajetan maintained that the authorities should be able to compel proprietors to fulfill their obligations toward the poor. However, civil law continued to punish those who transgressed this concession made by the Church.

The New Poverty

Having said all this we can well ask, what weight did almsgiving (or human solidarity in general) carry then in society at the time of Aquinas? Was his desire for economic equality fulfilled at all?

The so-called "works of mercy" are an important chapter in the homilies and theological treatises of the period. The well-to-do practiced almsgiving willingly enough and in so doing gained their own justification. In the cities, however, a new poverty began to spread. These were not the traditional poor who, for one reason or another, were unable to provide for themselves but instead laborers who worked and maintained their masters but could not reach a minimum level of subsistence. Their condition was so precarious that, although they hadn't as yet fallen into poverty they were continually exposed to the risk of doing so. Those primarily at risk were the wage-earners but there were also many craftsmen and, in general, those in a position of dependence, the little people.

How did all these people cross the demarcation line of poverty? The case of Jean Boinebroke of Douai is famous: he imported wool from England and gave it to local craftsmen to produce. Then he bought the finished product. It was his common practice to provide in-

Assisi, the church and monastery of St. Francis. Throughout the 1200's a continuous flow of immigrants from the fields to the cities took place. They usually settled in areas adjacent to the city walls. Here mendicant orders lived side by side with the poor.

ferior material and claim it to be a quality product. He practiced merciless usury demanding re-payment in work done for him rather than in money itself. This reached a point that craftsmen working for him—in one way or another—resembled slaves rather than free workers.

Others who did as Boinebroke grew in number. An entrepreneur like himself could control the entire chain of production from the purchase of the raw materials to the sale of the finished product. It was a process composed of a dozen intermediary operations which completely escaped the wage earner or individual craftsmen who could not come up with an effective challenge to this system. For this reason the revolts of the common worker usually ended in the bloody repression of violent uprisings.

Another reason for this sorry state of things was that the workers were easily exploited by individuals who had their own social advancement in mind.

Solidarity

The mendicant orders, as we have already mentioned, lived side by side with the poor. The poor were the object and purpose of almsgiving not the means. This did not diminish the fact that almsgiving was helpful to the salvation of the benefactors. It was not confined only to giving money but to seeking what the poor needed. This personalized the relationship and led to solidarity with the poor.

The laity that joined the Third Orders of Friars in the parishes and confraternities came into close contact with the poor as they tried to provide in some way for their needs that the imbalances of a growing society multiplied. It was the activity of lay Christians in the cities that prevented the new productive world from developing in a direction totally isolated from the Church. Society had been at times protected, at times held prisoner within the Church almost as if it were a minor who had not yet reached legal age. Now it was the Church who sought out its presence in society and in this effort it was the work of the laity more than any sermon which helped most.

The confraternities were of various kinds. Many which began as confraternities of prayer now oriented themselves towards social works; others as confraternities of occupations and trades gradually extended their field of action beyond their professional associations. These organizations maintained lodging for travelers and the underprivileged, as well as charitable institutions for the needy, the aged, infirm and the young. They distributed food and clothing, and provided doctors and lawyers for the poor. This legal aid was important because the poor were outranked in the courts by the power of their wealthy adversaries.

Beneficence adapted itself to an economy of money. The charitable organizations did not condemn money but sought to use it. The Association of "d'Or San Michele," for example, used banking criteria. It had a list of several hundred persons who were in need of permanent assistance. Each of these were given a coupon, called a policy, in their name, which gave them the right to assistance. Notwithstanding all these initiatives, almsgiving didn't function to the point that it could indicate to us if Aquinas was right that if available goods were distributed there would be enough for everyone.

The gears of time continued and with them the productive capacity of society increased, putting more people to work with more means of work. All this, however, without really freeing society from injustice and, as a result, without freeing it from poverty. □

1)M.D. Chenu, "La teologia nel XII secolo", Paris 1957, p.239. 2) I. Giordani, "The Social Message of the Early Church Fathers", Boston 1977, p. 317.

Artists: messengers of unity

Question: Do you think that art can be a means of communicating a message to mankind? What contribution can the artist give towards the building of more united world?

Youth from Italy

Liliana Cosi in Tchaikovsky's "Swan Lake"

Answer: I would answer your first question with a yes. It would seem that the hunger for intangible, transcendent, spiritual values is particularly felt in our times. Artists can strive to free the beauty within themselves, and get in touch with that talent they have received as a gift.

Theirs is the task of distilling from all the sounds, colors and voices around them, the notes of a certain harmony that they are almost obliged to listen to in awe and silence in order to then compose something of beauty and offer it to others to uplift as many as possible.

Only artists can and must fulfill this role. If they do not, then life is a little gloomier for many.

Artists are like messengers who are bearers of a dimension that the human soul is awaiting. They can reveal the inner space of the spirit; they can enable everyone to experience that their self-realization is possible, that they can fulfill the beauty they hold within.

The contribution the artist can give in building a more united world is a very great one in my opinion because they are the ones who can reveal the dimensions of the highest unity which is harmony. They experience this harmony within themselves, often with suffering, and they must give it. This is one very profound element in common among all artists, almost a goal, as it were.

The inner and external unity, within and without of themselves, is a continual stimulus towards which the artist inexplicably tends with all his or her energy, believing in it in spite of all personal imperfection. Artists live in the certainty that their efforts towards this inner and outer unity will be perceived by others and will continue to be a source of joy to many.

We are all striving for this new beauty, and the untiring thrust of the artist in this direction truly contributes in leading humanity towards a united world.

Liliana Cosi

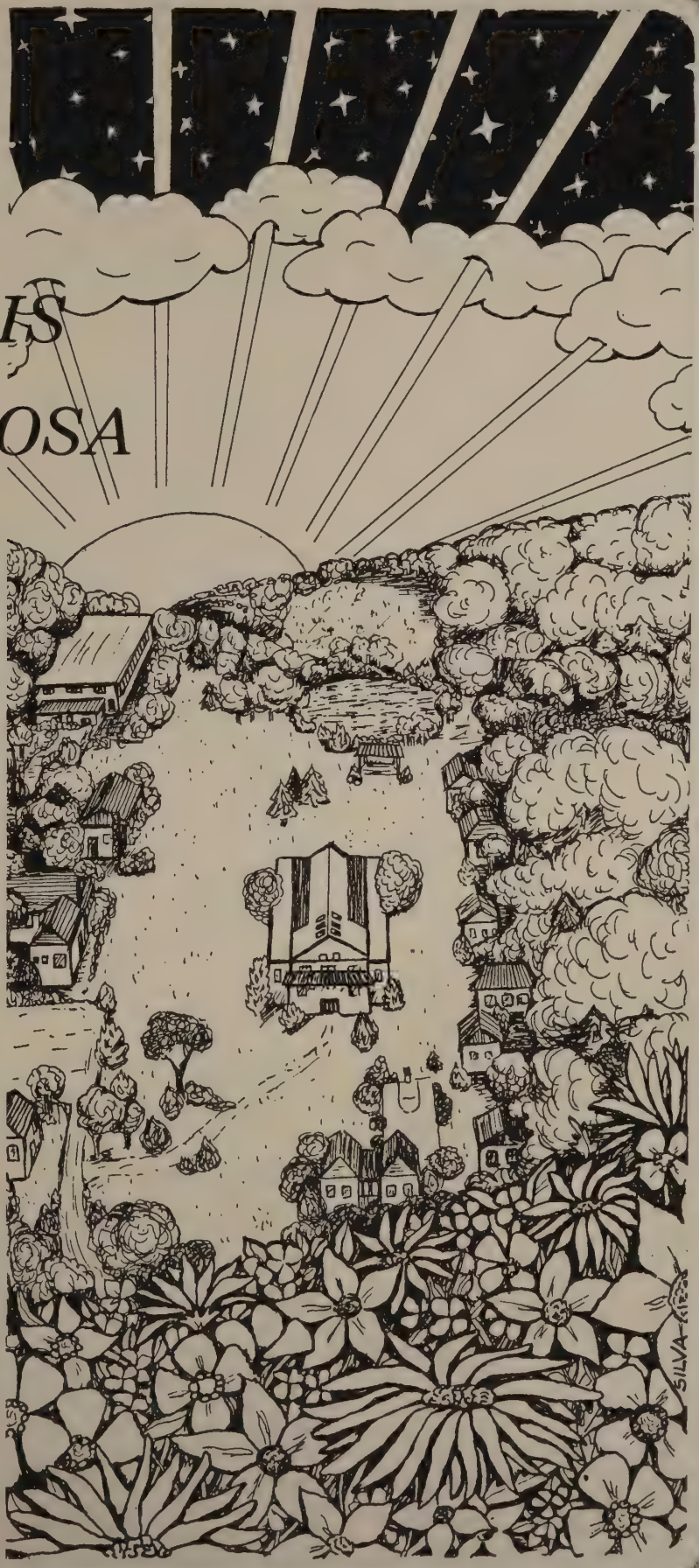
MARIAPOLIS LUMINOSA

the Permanent Mariapolis of North America

is now a reality

The official inauguration will take place on September 14, 1986 at Mariapolis Luminosa in Hyde Park, New York.

Chiara Lubich will be present.



For further information
contact the Focolare Center nearest you
(see inside back cover for addresses)

WORD OF LIFE

"No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:62)

A person who had evidently experienced a call from within presented himself to Jesus declaring his readiness to follow him. He set only one condition, one apparently dictated by the norms of good behavior and family obligation: to return home to say goodbye to his family.

But this condition was not to Jesus' liking and he rejected it. Jesus realized that it concealed a lack of generosity, and even little aptitude for the spreading of the kingdom. He said therefore:

"No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

At first sight we find this saying of Jesus disconcerting. But in order to understand exactly what he means we must place it in the context in which he is speaking.

In those times, as commentators explain, to go and greet one's relatives involved more than a quick goodbye. Normally it was necessary to stay a while in order to settle all the problems connected with one's departure, to face the endless disputes about inheritance, and the like. So this returning home might well have masked a certain attachment to earthly possessions, or even an excessive concern of gaining acceptance of this new choice of life made by the person in question. Even more it might have been an indication that, mixed in with the choice of following Jesus were certain purely human attachments or affections which were dictating circumstances.

In Jesus' eyes this kind of thinking meant that the person had failed to grasp the utter newness of the kingdom he had brought on earth. And this is the precise point he wanted to make here: his kingdom is such a great and urgent reality that it calls for an unqualified choice on the part of his disciples. This choice leaves no room for procrastination or bargaining, even at the risk of ruffling a few feathers and giving the appearance of going overboard and lacking all sense of propriety. On this basis alone would it be possible to collaborate with Jesus in the building of that new world that he wanted to establish on earth.

"No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

Strictly speaking, these words of Jesus are directed to those who want to follow him in preaching the Gospel. But once we have understood their meaning, as we have just explained, this sentence can easily be universalized and applied to the life of every believer. Furthermore, if originally a disciple was a person who left everything, even material possessions, to follow Jesus in announcing the kingdom, those too can be considered disciples of Jesus who follow him by living his word.

This word of life, then, is addressed to all without distinction: priests and laity, religious men and women, married persons or anyone living in the world, young and old, ordinary citizens and those who hold public office, etc.

'No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

This sentence presupposes that we have understood and experienced, to some extent, at least, the radical novelty and the extraordinary beauty of the revolution of love which Jesus brought on earth.

Jesus came to establish totally new relationships among people: between men and women, husband and wife, parents and children, teachers and students, workers and employers, citizens and political leaders, among races, among ethnic groups, among countries.

Jesus wanted to establish a new social order founded on justice, respect and true brotherhood. Jesus wanted to give us, individually and collectively, true peace, that divine peace that only he can give.

But for this to take place we must follow him even if at first glance he seems to be so demanding. We must live his word, each of us faithful to his or her calling.

"No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

EXPERIENCES

The following are experiences in living the Gospel which some of our readers shared with us.

This word of life, therefore, speaks to us of radicalism, of determination. This is how Jesus expects us to respond.

If we have understood the newness and beauty of his Gospel it will not be hard to see that nothing is more contrary to it than lack of generosity, ambiguity, indecision, spiritual laziness, halfway measures.

All of us are looking for something that will satisfy us fully. Certainly many of us are convinced that this can come about only from Jesus: only he possesses true solutions.

But here is the difficulty: at one and the same time we want and we do not want to take this step. On the one hand we want to love Jesus; on the other, we would like to strike a bargain with him to accept our attachments, our slowness, our mediocrity. We would like to follow him and still be able to turn and look back occasionally, retracing our steps, or taking two steps backward for every forward step.

All these attitudes are unacceptable to Jesus. They are diametrically opposed to the clarity of purpose and unwavering will which might appear harsh at times but nevertheless are indispensable conditions to enter the marvelous world of Jesus and attract his divine presence, his healing grace, his priceless joy, his splendid light, his beneficent strength in and among us.

Chiara Lubich

Without ulterior motives

Nearly three years ago a medical colleague came to work in the department where I work. His job position had been transferred from another area, very poorly run, where there had been a lot of problems. I had previously been asked to go to that area to find out the cause of these problems and to make recommendations. I did this with a great deal of effort and care but my recommendations were basically ignored. At this point therefore I was most unhappy to have this colleague come and work with me. I was going to be this person's supervisor, as well.

We continued along not very happily until one day we had a big argument. My colleague told me that I was a rigid person and that everything had to be done my way. I said nothing but it did make me look at myself and I did not like what I saw especially since I had decided to live as a Christian. I knew I was not loving my neighbor, this colleague, the way I was supposed to. When he was leaving on his vacation I spoke to him and said that I had done some rethinking about his remarks, that he was right and I was sorry for what had happened. I hoped that he would settle down and be happier in his work when he returned.

Our working relationship improved, but his personality and work habits continued to aggravate me. One day the word of life for that month came to mind, "If anyone wants to be first, he must make himself last of all and servant of all" (Mark 9:35), and I made a very special effort to love my colleague with this phrase in mind. I found I was able to do so and since then our relationship has improved tremendously. At times I find myself getting annoyed with something he says or does, but I make a conscious effort to love by serving and not expecting to be served and harmony is restored.

A.C.

Before bringing my gift...

It had been a difficult time for our family. Circumstances at home made it necessary for us to consider placing our teen-age daughter in a juvenile home. Not everyone agreed with our decision. The grandmother of one of our daughter's friends disagreed emphatically with what we were about to do. She had even come to our home to persuade me to change my mind. Her persuasion turned to anger, and she accused me of all sorts of things, including being a heartless mother. How could she know of the many months of agony our family had suffered, or how painful it was for my husband and I to arrive at this decision? I tried to tell her, but she kept hammering away at me. Suddenly, I wanted to lash back at her, and tell her to leave my house. Yet, I knew I couldn't. ►

It is years that I am trying to love Jesus in every neighbor. At times, it is not easy. The present situation with this lady was one of those times. If I gave in to my human nature it would cause an irreparable separation between this lady and myself.

The woman continued her tirade and, as she stormed out of the house, I was reduced to tears.

The next morning, as I was on my way to Mass, I thought of the sentence of the Gospel which I had been trying to put into practice for that month, "If you bring your gift to the altar and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift at the altar, go first to be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift."

The lady's home was on the way to the church. I thought of going to see her to try to come to a peaceful reconciliation. It seemed ridiculous. Why was I doing this? I never said one harsh thing to her. I couldn't even think of how to go about talking with her. Yet, I could not get that sentence out of my mind, "If your brother has anything against you...."

So, with my knees shaking, I rang her bell. When she answered, I began stammering, saying that I wanted to be friends with her again, that I was sorry if I had offended her in any way. Immediately, she put her arms around me and begged me to forgive her. She said, "No, it's I who owe you an apology! I'm so glad you came!"

Needless to say, when I brought my gift to the altar, it was accompanied with great joy.

L.S.

(Continued from page 13)

the other, the world which was dead and void of echoes and she was between them with her soul, her intelligence, and her senses suspended in nothingness and whirling in emptiness. If in this state, saints did not have faith—even if it was only shadowy—that God still existed and loved them, they would wind up in neuroses or lose their mind. But God clasps firmly to himself the soul who is living in this obscure light.

Blind Faith

Elizabeth was approaching death: a terrible illness called Addison's disease which took away her independence, so that she became almost immobile but still she wrote: "To die in the state of mind I once enjoyed would have been too sweet! I am going in a state of blind faith and I prefer it because in this way I am like my master, and nearer the truth. I am happier not to enjoy his presence, so that he can take more joy in my love."

The imminence of death presented itself to her in its total nakedness. In front of the transcendence of God she realized the limitations of her nature as a created being: "How solemn is the actual moment, and to think beyond it is awe-inspiring. I seem to have been living there for a long time already, and still it is unknown.... Death is a thing of terror.... As for myself, although at one time I thought I was free of all that, I find nevertheless that I am experiencing something which is indescribable of the justice and holiness of God. I feel that death is a punishment."

A short time before her death she wrote to a friend: "I leave you my faith in the presence of the God, who is Love and dwells in our souls." She died on November 9th, 1906. She was beginning her task of intercession: "It seems to me that in heaven my mission will be to draw souls by helping them to come out of themselves and cling to God with a spontaneity that is full of love and to hold them in that great interior silence that permits God to imprint himself in them and transform them into his own self." The only prayer that she continued to use right to the end was "Elevation into the most holy Trinity" which she had composed at the very beginning of her life in the cloister: "My God, the Trinity whom I adore ... you are my three, my all, my blessedness, infinite solitude, the immensity in which I lose myself. I entrust myself to you as a victim..." She was beatified on November 25th 1984.

Claudio Casoli

A photo of Elizabeth taken some days after the profession of her final vows, January 11, 1903.

1) Corinthians 6:19; 2) Hebrews 11:1; 3) Colossians 1:24; 4) Psalms 18:12; 5) Psalms 104:2.

ontinued from page 8)

eans that this little industry, hich provides the only source f income for these people, is ying out.

The attitude of the landwners in general has been to ake maximum advantage of hese renters by paying them lways less for the bricks. Eventually they plan to send hem all away, divide the land nto lots, and commercially evelop the area with the exectation of big profits. The reat need for housing then ould work in their favor.

"At first," Carlos says, "we hought of finding ways of improving their brick-making industry, by obtaining equipment nd machinery, but we realized hat we would only be wasting money."

It was a patient who opened way. One of the doctors on is round of visits through the nountains came across a young oy who had invented a system or making different types of itchers and vases. We realized hat with some technical advice s to the proper chemicals to dd to the local earthen clay we an initiate a school of crafts, f ceramics and thereby diversify the industry and train the inhabitants for another kind of work. It looks very possible ecause there is also gradually developing a communitarian mentality among them; a mentality which will be indispensable to this population for resolving its problems in the future.

But we already are seeing results in the modest projects which are currently going on. There is in existence there a kind of neighborhood committee. In conjunction with this committee it has been decided to buy a piece of land in order to build—in place of Tiberius' hut—a larger structure that can be divided into a clinic, a sewing school, a school of diet and nutrition, a school of learning, a store. The relatively simple project was studied—free of charge—by one of our architects who will also follow the work of construction.

Mr. and Mrs. Tiberius. It was they who offered a hut which has been used as a medical and dental clinic and thrift shop.

However, problems have arisen that, without the faith that the impossible can become possible, would otherwise be insurmountable. The landowners, and in particular the president of their association, do not want to give up any piece of land. They do not want anyone from outside their group to establish even a toe-hold.

Furthermore, the neighborhood citizens committee has gotten bogged down in legal problems and all sorts of red tape in their efforts to help. We have a lawyer who is trying to assist them in untying the legal knots as they arise one after the other. In the meantime one of the landlords just came through by giving up a piece of land. We've been able to mark the boundaries and enclose it. The people of Los Chircales, with good taste and patience, have prepared the bricks—this time for their own community.

Already all the activity and excitement of working together for this project is making itself felt. Once again we are seeing people coming together to help. For example, a lady who has a management position in a multinational corporation has, by her zeal for Los Chircales, drawn many of her colleagues to become involved. A financially comfortable group, they live in one of the best areas of the city. They are now linked by the desire to put into practice the Word of Life and they have established a fund to which each month they contribute a pre-established amount to the Los Chircales Project. Carlos adds, "You should have seen these corporate world people the first time they climbed up there, walked through the streets among the huts and began to meet the people. In mud up to their ankles and tired out from the excitement of their new and unusual experience they were nevertheless deeply happy to participate and experience close at hand what one of them called, "a taste of what life is really all about."

So this is where things stand now at Los Chircales, or rather I should say where things were as of a few months ago. I'm sure that Project Los Chircales continues to go ahead.

MARIAPOLIS 1986

The 1986 Mariapolis will be an extraordinary opportunity to learn, to grow, to share and above all to experience unity which is the basis and goal of the Christian community. You, your family and friends and all those interested in knowing more about the Focolare spirituality are cordially invited to attend.

The Mariapolis gatherings are the summer meetings of the Focolare, held every year, for those who wish to come into contact with it.

For one week the Mariapolis offers to hundreds of people of all ages and walks of life a very full program that includes general sessions with talks on the spirituality of unity, sharing of experiences in living this spirituality, documentaries, meetings in small sharing groups and recreational programs. The Mariapolis is a time for prayer and recollection. The celebration of the Eucharist is at the center of each day and all participants gather together at the conclusion of the activities for evening prayer.

Children have separate activities which involve them in the life of the Mariapolis through various spiritual and recreational programs. Special programs are available for teenagers as well.

The week, however, is more than the sum of its parts. It is an experience of how life, also every day life, can be transformed if love and unity are its foundation. When the Mariapolis ends, people find that it was not only a tremendously enjoyable week, but they have experienced a way of living that they will be able to bring back home

SOUTHWEST:

New Mexico State University
Las Cruces, New Mexico
June 29, after supper - July 5, after breakfast

Home of the main campus of New Mexico State University, Las Cruces is a pleasant blend of indian-spanish-anglo heritage and modern technology. A city of 60,000, Las Cruces is the second largest city in New Mexico. Its most distinguishing geographical features are the Organ Mountains to the east and the Rio Grande to the West. The university is located on the south edge of Las Cruces and is 40 miles from El Paso, Texas.

MIDWEST/EAST COAST:

Alfred University
Alfred, New York
July 20, for supper - July 26, after breakfast

Located in an attractive natural setting between the foothills of the Allegheny Mountains and the Finger Lakes Region of upstate New York, Alfred University's 232-acre hillside campus adjoins the village of Alfred and is surrounded by some of the State's most scenic and intriguing attractions. The village of Alfred, 70 miles south of Rochester is easily reached by East-West Route 17 (Southern Tier Expressway) and from the North and South by Routes 15, 19, 21 and 36.

NORTHWEST:

David Thompson University Centre
Nelson, British Columbia
July 7, after supper - July 13, after breakfast.

Nelson, "Queen city of the Kootenays," is nestled along the banks of the Kootenay Lake. Surrounded by mountains, the city is both historically interesting and scenically beautiful. It can be reached from the southwest and southeast by the Crowsnest Highway 3, from the north along Highway 23 through Revelstoke, from the east by Highway 6 through Vernon and from Washington State along Highway 95 or 395. The nearest airport is in Castlegar, 30 minutes from Nelson.

EASTERN CANADIAN MARIAPOLIS:

Carlton University
Ottawa, Ontario
July 27 after supper - August 2 after breakfast

The Mariapolis to be held at Carlton University in Ottawa, Canada will be in French and English. Those interested in participating are requested to contact the Focolare Centers in Toronto, Canada.

CARIBBEAN: **(in Spanish only)**

The Mariapolis for the Caribbean will be held in Jarabacoa, Dominican Republic. Space is limited. Invitations are being sent only to Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic.

SOUTHWEST MARIAPOLIS
New Mexico State University
Las Cruces, New Mexico
June 29, after supper to
July 5, after breakfast

NORTHWEST MARIAPOLIS
David Thompson University Center
Nelson, British Columbia
July 13, after supper to
July 19, after breakfast

MIDWEST/EAST COAST MARIAPOLIS
Alfred University
Alfred, New York
July 20, for supper to
July 26, after breakfast

GENERAL INFORMATION

Special services provided:
Children's program — Nursery facilities

Simultaneous translations:
Southwest, Midwest-East Coast Mariapolis: Spanish
(When you check for translation please indicate how many people will be needing it.)

Priests should bring their own alb and stole for concelebration.

We cannot provide accommodations prior to the beginning or after the ending of the Mariapolis.

If small children who are not required to pay for accommodations (see each Mariapolis for age limit) use a bed, they will have to pay for it.

Young people under 18 years of age unaccompanied by a parent must have a permission slip signed by a parent.

Pets are not allowed in dormitories.

Daily rates available for those not attending the whole week.

Accommodations are in college dorms with double occupancy rooms. A limited number of single rooms are available for an additional charge.

THE 1986 MARIAPOLIS

"The Word: Way to a New World"

Many are the ideas offered today by those who want to change the course of history. Christians, however, are called to bear witness to the transforming power of the Word of God. This year we will consider what the Word of God is and what it has been throughout these 43 years, for we wish to bear witness to its impact in our life and in the world around us.

YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS

_____

_____

PLACE STAMP HERE

FOCOLARE MOVEMENT—MARIAPOLIS

_____

_____

WHERE TO SEND YOUR REGISTRATION

FOR SOUTHWEST MARIAPOLIS TO:
Focolare Movement - Mariapolis
P.O. Box 71701
Los Angeles, CA 90071 OR
Focolare Movement - Mariapolis
P.O. Box 32302
San Antonio, TX 78216

FOR NORTHWEST MARIAPOLIS TO:
Focolare Movement - Mariapolis
P.O. Box 1251
Coquitlam, B.C.
Canada V3J 6V9 OR
Focolare Movement - Mariapolis
P.O. Box 71701
Los Angeles, CA 90071 OR
Focolare Movement - Mariapolis
P.O. Box 302 - Stn. T
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M6B 4A3

FOR MIDWEST/EAST COAST MARIAPOLIS TO:
Focolare Movement - Mariapolis
P.O. Box 496
New York, NY 10021 OR
Focolare Movement - Mariapolis
P.O. Box 53426
Chicago, IL 60653 OR
Focolare Movement - Mariapolis
P.O. Box 302 - Stn. T
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M6B 4A3 OR
Focolare Movement - Mariapolis
P.O. Box 4958
Washington, DC 20008 OR
Focolare Movement - Mariapolis
P.O. Box 239
Roslindale, MA 02131

TERMS OF PAYMENT

Registration: The registration fee is not included in the accommodations fee. Please note fees and deadlines for registration and accommodations under specification for each Mariapolis. Late registration fee: US$5 additional.

Your cancelled check is your receipt.

Cancellations in writing received prior to dates indicated for each Mariapolis will be given full refund. After this date money is tranferable to another person but not refundable.

To register for the Mariapolis

1. Tear off page.

please read carefully detailed information
on both sides of the form

SOUTHWEST MARIAPOLIS

Las Cruces, New Mexico

June 29, after supper to July 5, after breakfast

EGISTRATION FEE
dults ..... US$100
arried couples attending with
vn children under 18 years ..... US$150
ll youth, whether accompanied by parents or not, except
ildren 13 and under pay a registration fee.)
outh: 14-17 years ..... US$ 30
13 years and under ..... US$ –

CCOMMODATIONS: Meals and lodging:
dults ..... US$110
outh: 14-17 years ..... US$110
8-13 years ..... US$ 90
2-7 years ..... US$ 80

o accommodation fee for children under 2 unless they use a
ed, in which case the fee is US$30. Please specify on the
egistration form if so desired. **No trailers permitted.**

ERMS OF PAYMENT
egistration fee due by **June 3.** Full amount to be paid by **June**
7. Full refund for cancellations received in writing by **June 24.**
IMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION: ☐Spanish.

NORTHWEST MARIAPOLIS

Nelson, British Columbia

July 13, after supper to July 19, after breakfast

REGISTRATION FEE
Adults ..... Cdn.$100
Married couple or family maximum
with children under 18 years ..... Cdn.$175
Youth: 13-18 years ..... Cdn.$ 40
2-12 years ..... Cdn.$ 20

All youth except children under 2 pay a registration fee.

ACCOMMODATIONS: Meals and lodging:
Adults ..... Cdn.$150
Youth: 13-18 years ..... Cdn.$120
2-12 years ..... Cdn.$100

No accommodation fee for children under 2 unless they use a bed in which case the fee is Cdn.$40. **Self-contained trailers allowed.**

Accommodations - Special rates:
Youth who sleep in their parents' room with sleeping bags (maximum 2 per room):
13-18 years ..... Cdn.$70
2-12 years ..... Cdn.$50
Please specify on the registration form if so desired.

Meals only:
Adults and youth 13-18 years ..... Cdn.$80
Youth 2-12 years ..... Cdn.$60

Registration fee due by **June 7.** Full amount to be paid by **June 21.**
Full refund for cancellations received in writing by **June 28.**

MIDWEST/EAST COAST MARIAPOLIS

Alfred, New York

July 20, for supper to July 26, after breakfast

REGISTRATION FEE
Adults ..... US$100
Married couples attending with
own children under 18 years ..... US$150
All youth, whether accompanied by parents or not) except
children 2 and under pay a registration fee.
Youth: 13-17 years ..... US$ 30
3-12 years ..... US$ 25

ACCOMMODATIONS: Meals and lodging:
Adults ..... US$115
Youth: 13-17 years ..... US$115
3-12 years ..... US$ 58

Youth (3-12) should bring linens or sleeping bag, and towels.

Meals only: Adults ..... US$60
Youth: 13-17 years ..... US$60
3-12 years ..... US$35

10 campsites available 2 miles from campus—first come, first serve basis—US$7.00 per night. Each site includes all utilities (electric and water) and showers and washroom facilities are on the grounds. For reservations and further information, write IMMEDIATELY to Focolare Movement, P.O. Box 496, New York, NY 10021 specifying needs.

Registration fee due by **June 20.** Full amount due by **June 30.**
Full refund for cancellations received in writing by **July 7.**
SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION: ☐Spanish.
(Please check if needed and specify number)

I/We will attend the –

☐ SOUTHWEST MARIAPOLIS

☐ MIDWEST/EAST COAST MARIAPOLIS

☐ NORTHWEST MARIAPOLIS

NAME(S) OF PARTICIPANT(S)
(Please indicate age and sex of participant(s) under 18 years of age.]

LAST NAME: _____ **FIRST NAME:**

Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Miss ☐ _____

Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Miss ☐ _____

Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Miss ☐ _____

Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Miss ☐ _____

Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Miss ☐ _____

ADDRESS: _____
Street **City**

_____
State **Zip** **Tel.**

REGISTRATION(S):
single persons $ _____ **couple $** _____ **Total $** _____

ACCOMMODATIONS:
children $ _____ **adults and youth $** _____ **Total $** _____
Amount enclosed $ _____

(Please make check payable to Focolare Movement in US$)

If you plan to participate in only a part of the Mariapolis please chec below—

DAY OF ARRIVAL: _____
breakfast ☐ **lunch** ☐ **dinner** ☐

DAY OF DEPARTURE: _____
breakfast ☐ **lunch** ☐ **dinner** ☐

I will come by car and can offer _____ **number of seats.**

Please send me more information about group fare **Bus** ☐

What is the Focolare Movement?

THE BEGINNINGS

FOCOLARE means "hearth," "family fireside." What first strikes people when they come in contact with members of the Focolare, whether in small groups or in large gatherings, is the atmosphere of a family. It is a family formed by many different people in various walks of life. The Focolare Movement is also known as the "Work of Mary." Under this name it was approved by Pope John XXIII in 1962.

The Focolare Movement began in 1943 in Italy. In the midst of the terrible destruction of World War II, Chiara Lubich realized that God is the only one worth living for. As a result, she began to center her life on the Gospel, together with a small group of young women who followed her. Their ideal became one of striving toward the fulfillment of Jesus' last prayer to the Father: "May they all be one" (Jn.17:21).

The life of Chiara and her first companions, and the spiritual way they spontaneously followed, gave rise to the unique form of spirituality of the Focolare Movement, a spirituality of unity. It has proved to be a powerful means of introducing the Gospel into modern life, of going to God together.

WHO ARE THE FOCOLARINI

Single men and women live in separate communities called Focolare Centers. Their principal aim is to achieve unity among themselves through mutual charity practiced twenty-four hours a day. They follow the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. They work as other laymen and women in regular jobs and professions.

Some married persons, even though continuing to live in their families, participate fully in the life of either the men's or women's Focolare Centers in their common effort to achieve this same unity. They are called "Married Focolarini" and form the backbone of a vast Movement within the Movement, called the New Family Movement.

THE VOLUNTEERS AND THE NEW HUMANITY MOVEMENT

The Volunteers, also called the "Volunteers of God," are a large group within the Focolare Movement; they would like to transform all human realities according to the Gospel spirit. The Volunteers are the backbone of the mass movement called New Humanity. The aim of this Movement is to help form a society made of men and women who are made "new" by the Gospel message and who can then bring new life to all fields of human activity (education, business, etc.). This results in new social relationships which, in turn, lead to the realization of new structures of society.

GEN

The new generations of the Focolare Movement form another Movement or, better, three movements: the Gen 2, the Gen 3 and the Gen 4 Movements, divided according to their various age groups. "Gen" stands for new generation. The Gen have committed themselves to living the Gospel message of love and to sharing with other youth the conviction they have that the Gospel is the answer to every question and the motive for everything they do.

THE MOVEMENT AMONG THE RELIGIOUS

Men and women religious — although they live according to their own rules and constitutions and are already a distinct part of the Church through their religious families — can also be associated with the Focolare.

Contact with the Movement helps them to focus their attention on the specific charism of their founders, and to see how it can be lived in the present time.

PRIESTS — PRIESTS' MOVEMENT —SEMINARIANS — PARISH MOVEMENT

Many diocesan priests are committed to living the spirituality of the Focolare Movement. Some of them live in community. They form the backbone of the Priests' Movement which is made up of priests who live the spirituality of unity.

FOCOLARE FAMILY

The largest group within the Focolare Movement is made up of men, women and young people who are connected with the Movement without having any formal ties with it. Their bond of unity stems from their acceptance of its spirit and their desire to live it.

ECUMENISM

The Movement not only crossed the political boundaries of more than 100 countries, it has also gone beyond the barriers erected for centuries between the various Christian Churches.

Ecumenical activities take place in the different parts of the world where the Movement exists.

In the past few years a promising, ongoing dialogue has been established with faithful of other religions.

SUMMER MARIAPOLIS

Summer meetings are held every year for those interested in the Movement and for those who wish to come into contact with it. For one week persons of all ages and walks of life are exposed to the spirituality of unity. Above all, they strive to practice it by creating among themselves a rapport that molds them into a community. It is intended to be a basic experience of such intense unity that the people will be able to bring it back into their own environments. And this is the most striking fruit of these conventions. They tend to be models of a world which lives according the Gospel.

PERMANENT MARIAPOLIS

The need to prolong the experience of the summer meetings brought about the birth of small cities called Permanent Mariapolis. They are made up of young men and women, as well as whole families, who are there for a designated period of time to be formed according to the Gospel spirit of unity.

They also attend classes in Sacred Scripture, Theology and Sociology and work for their own support.

MARIAPOLIS CENTERS

In addition to the Permanent Mariapolis, there are Mariapolis Centers, which are training centers for the members of the Movement.

FOCOLARE ADDRESSES IN NORTH AMERICA

CHICAGO:
P.O. Box 53426
Chicago, IL 60653

SAN ANTONIO:
P.O. Box 32302
San Antonio. TX 78216

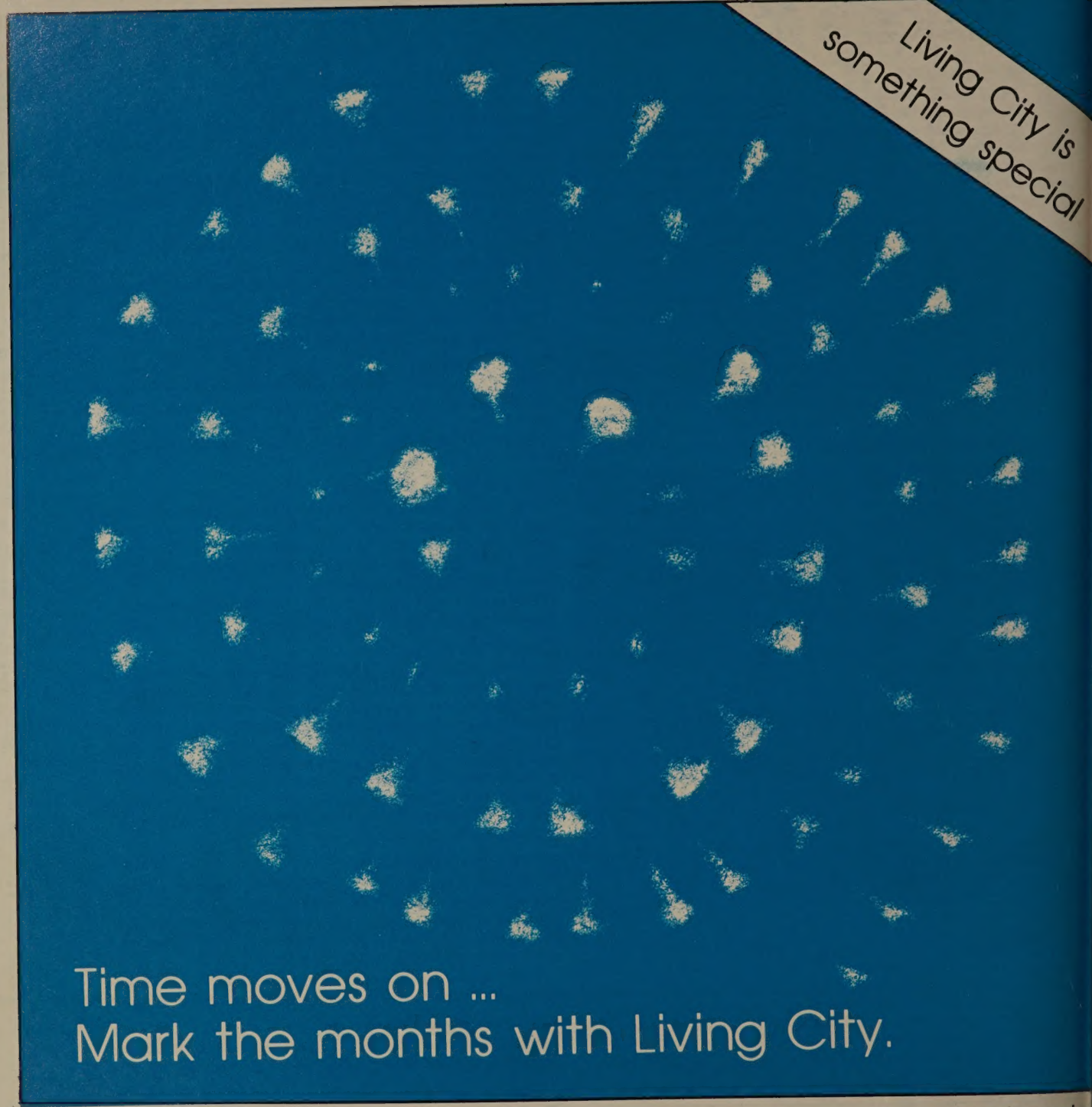
NEW YORK:
P.O. Box 496
New York, NY 10021

BOSTON:
P.O. Box 239
Roslindale, MA 02131

WASHINGTON, DC:
P.O. Box 4958
Washington, DC 20008

LOS ANGELES
P.O. Box 71701
Los Angeles, CA 90071

TORONTO:
P.O. Box 302 — Stn.T
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M6B 4A3



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